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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Albania

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SUBJECT Conditions in the Village of Letaj: Location/Administration/Religion/Communications/Border Controls/Agriculture

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Location

2. Metaj is located in northern Albania 1000 m from the Yugoslav frontier. It is about 40 km north of Kukes, the nearest town, 23 km as the crow flies. It is about 15 km from Kruma, as the crow flies.
3. "The village is on a hill, about 500 m above sea level. No accessible roads link it with the outside world. A small mountain road runs to Kruma, but it can be used only by horses or mules, not even by horse-drawn or mule-drawn carts. The soil is comparatively rich. There are thousands of bears in the surrounding forests.

Population

4. ^{main occupation} "The population of Letaj is about 1500 persons, all farmers.

Religion

5. All the villagers are Mohammedans. Hence they never touch the boars. The Mohammedan Xhamia are situated one km from the village. The priest in 1951 was Moll Ahmeti, aged about 60, about 164 cm high with white hair and blue eyes. He came from Prizren. He was not a Communist.

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Administration

6. "The village of Letaj comes under the town of Qarr. Officials in Qarr supervise the villages of Letaj, Dobrunë, Golaj, Peraj, Perollaj and Vllahani.
7. "There is a village People's Board (Kshilli Kutundit). The members of this board are the only villagers with arms. They have German carbines.
8. "There is no administrative building in the village. All meetings of the villagers take place in the classrooms of the elementary school, a one-story building. Naturally there is no cinema.

Power

9. "There is no electric power. Thus lighting is by kerosene lamps.

Communications

10. "Since there is no power, there are no radio sets. The only contact with the outside world is through the postman. He brings the mail twice a week, Monday and Friday. At that time he also brings about five copies of the newspapers Bashkimi and Zeri Popullit. In 1951 the postman was always armed with a German carbine.

Medical Facilities

11. "There is no doctor in the village. The nearest doctor is in Kruma.

Political Orientation

12. "The only convinced Communists in the village are certain village leaders [see paragraph 12]. Although the youth (aged 17-25) are forced to join the Communist youth organization (Org. Rinis) they have no sympathy for the regime. Actually there is strong opposition to it in Letaj. The youth organization in Letaj is subordinate to headquarters in Kukes (K.G. Bashkimi Rinis Punes Shypris Rethis-Kukes), which means the Central Committee of the Union of the Youth of the Albanian Labor Party. This committee supervises the activities of the Organizata Baze (Basic organizations) in the towns of the Kukes region. The Org. Rinis in Letaj is under the immediate supervision of the Basic Organization in Qarr, as are the Org. Rinis units in Dobrunë, Golaj, Letaj, Peraj, Perollaj and Vllahani. There are 10 members of the Basic Organization committee in Qarr, including [in 1951]:

- (a) Isuf Veseli - Secretary of the CP and of the Basic Organization in Qarr. He was 25, about 125 cm tall, with brown hair, eyes and mustache. Single. A farmer from Golaj. He was a partisan in World War II. The third and fourth fingers of his right hand are missing. He was a staunch Communist, hated by the farmers.
- (b) (fmu) Bubi - Farmer living in Dobrunë. Aged 30, about 163 cms tall, single, with black hair, eyes and mustache.
- (c) Hasan Qari - Farmer living in Qarr. Aged 25, blond, with blue eyes and a mustache.
- (d) Aslan Peka - Director of the elementary school in Letaj [see paragraph 12].

The farmers were gathered at the elementary school about 10 times a month for political education, by the President of the People's Board or the Director of the school. At school the children also received political education.

13. "There is no branch of the Sigurimi Shtetit (S. SH. - State Security organization) in the village. Its authority is vested in the members of the People's Board, who spy on the farmers.

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Border Controls

14. "The village is linked indirectly with the outside world in that a barracks of the Frontier Guards (Mbrojtia Popullore) is situated ~~there~~ just on the Yugoslavian border. This barracks is linked by telephone and wireless directly to the headquarters of the Mbrojtia Popullore in Kruma. The barracks is a one-story brick building, about 25 x 10 x 10 m. There are about 60 frontier guards there, under the command of an aspirant (sublieutenant). He has two NCO's under him.
15. "The frontier guards do not interfere at all with the life of the village. They are there to guard the frontier. There is one watch tower (pika e vrojtimt) in front of the barracks which is linked to the barracks by phone. Two guards with binoculars stand duty. They are armed with Soviet PPS automatic rifles and have also a German Schars machine gun. The frontier guards in Letaj are all armed with either the Soviet PPS or a World War II-type German carbine. The post has a total of four German Schars machine guns. It also has four or five trained dogs, but the dogs are of no use because they know all the villagers.
16. "Residents of Letaj can approach to within 50 m of the borderline. There is no barbed wire in that region between Yugoslavia and Albania, ~~no no-man's land~~, no levelled off or plowed area. There are only white sign stones, about 0.50 m high. These are the only indications to inhabitants of the border zone. However, there are mines scattered all along the border. During the night wild animals run into them, and the explosions can be heard in the village.
17. "Nothing seemed to have changed in this border zone between 1951 and August 1952.

Local Officials

18. "The Communist leaders of Letaj in May 1951 were:
 - (a) Gurr Brahimi - President of the People's Board (Kryetar i Kshillit). He was about 40, 165 cm tall, weighing about 65 kg. He had brown hair, blue eyes and a small mustache. He was a farmer. He was married with two children, a girl, Sonia, aged 10, and a boy about three. He was a staunch member of the CP.
 - (b) Osmar Dauti - Head of the Democratic Front (Frontit Demokratik) in the village (Kryetari Frontit). He was about 35, 180 cm tall, weighing about 77 kg. He had black hair and eyes. He was a farmer, married, with two boys aged about five and six. He was a staunch Communist.
 - (c) Shaban Bardhoshi - Member of the People's Board and of the CP. He was about 23, 170 cm tall, weighing 72 kgs. He had brown hair and blue eyes. When I last knew him he was engaged to a local girl. He was a farmer.
 - (d) Zenel Haliti - Member of the People's Board and of the CP. He was about 35, 180 cm tall, weighing about 80 kgs. He had black hair and blue eyes. He was a farmer, married to a peasant woman from the nearby village of Zherje. His first wife died in 1948 leaving him with a boy aged 10 and a girl aged six.
 - (e) Hasan Koka - Member of the People's Board and of the Party. He was about 25, 177 cm tall, weighing about 70 kgs. He had black hair and blue eyes. He was a farmer and single.
 - (f) Aslan Peka - Director of the village elementary school and also secretary of the Communist youth organization for the village (Sekretari i Organizata e Rinise). He was 24, 170 cm tall, weighing 66 kg. with brown hair, black eyes and was single. He was a strong member of the CP. He came from Kruma. I learned in 1952 that he was drafted in November 1951 and sent to the Reparti Ushtarak-Durres, the artillery unit of the Durres barracks, located on Roga Cyrilave in Durres.

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- (g) Sami Ferizi - Director of the elementary school and secretary of the youth organization, who replaced Peka in November 1951. He was 24, 170 cm tall, weighing 75 kg. He had blond hair, blue eyes and was single. He was a member of the CP. In August 1952 he was the only teacher in the school.
- (h) (fnu) Caushi - Commander of the Mbrojtia Popullore in Letaj. Rank of aspirant. He was 28, 168 cm tall, weighing 70 kg. He had blond hair and blue eyes and came from Tropoja.

Agriculture

19. "Compared to other areas in Albania the soil in Letaj is rich. The farmers cultivate maize, tobacco, beans, some potatoes and fruits.
20. "As of August 1952 no kolkhoz had been organized. After the agrarian reform five kulaks were left in Letaj -- today in Albania 'kulak' is synonymous with 'reactionary'. The kulaks include Halit Beli and Bajram Alia. The farmers in Letaj own from a minimum of two to a maximum of 10 hectares of land each. They may sow whatever crops they want. The People's Board does not interfere. The People's Board does:
- (a) determine the quantities of various agricultural products, meat, wool, etc. to be delivered to the State and the taxes on the farmers; and
- (b) sees that each farmer has made his deliveries at the end of the agricultural year. Members of the People's Board confiscate the household goods and livestock of farmers unable to fulfill their delivery quotas.
21. "I do not know the exact criteria for determining delivery quotas. I do know that heavier quotas and taxes were imposed on the five kulaks. But the quotas are heavy anyway. Many farmers have escaped into Yugoslavia to avoid them.
22. "All quota deliveries must be made to the Kooperativa e Gjumullimit (Cooperative) in Kruma. The following list indicates (Column A) prices paid by the Cooperative to the farmers and (Column B) the selling prices for the same products when sold by the Cooperative to citizen consumers. [redacted] note: It is not clear whether these are prices for 1951 or for 1952. Prices are in lek.

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<u>Commodity</u>	<u>Price - Lek</u>	
	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>
<u>Grune</u> (corn), per kilo [wheat]	2	100-150
<u>Miser</u> (maize), per kilo	1	100
Note: Prices in (B) apply to resale in form of flour for maize and corn		
Eggs, each	1	15

Note: since the egg deliveries took place once a year, as with other products, the farmers, in order to have the proper amount ready on one day, had to purchase eggs from other farmers at 15 lek each

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Commodity	Organization	Price - Lek
	A	B
Milk - No milk deliveries. Cheese and butter deliveries instead.		
<u>Djathi</u> Cheese: 1st quality, per kilo	20	500-600
2nd quality, per kilo	15	400
3rd quality, per kilo	10	350
<u>Gjize</u> cheese; per kilo	5	200
<u>Gjalpe</u> (butter): 1st quality, per kilo	45	800
2nd quality, per kilo	30	600
<u>Fasule</u> (beans) per kilo	6	80-100
Potatoes - No delivery quotas since no few are grown in the Letaj area.		
Meat (Delivered in the form of live animals).		
<u>Lopa</u> (cow), per kilo	25	125
<u>Delja</u> (male sheep), per kilo	45	200
<u>Dhia</u> (sheep), per kilo	30	150

Note: If the weight of the live animal is not sufficient to cover the meat quota, the discrepancy, if not more than 2-3 kilos, may be replaced by live hens. The Cooperative prices are those for the meat after it has been prepared by the butchers. The meat is not graded.

<u>Duhan</u> (tobacco): 1st quality, per kilo	60	unknown
2nd quality, per kilo	40	unknown
3rd quality, per kilo	20	unknown

Note: the tobacco must be delivered completely dry. It is not paid for in cash. It is exchanged for goods on sale at the Cooperative.

Wool - Every farmer possessing sheep must deliver 25, a 'sheep-quota', consisting of 100 gms of wool, per sheep, per annum. The cooperative pays the farmer 25 lek per kilo of wool.

23. "The farmers can sell their cows and horses. The People's Board does not mind so long as they get the requisite livestock for the meat quotas at the end of the year. The following prices indicate the astronomical prices which livestock command in Albania:

Livestock, apiece	Price in Lek
<u>Lopa</u> (cow)	20,000-40,000
<u>Kan</u> (Horse)	20,000-30,000
<u>Ka</u> (ox)	15,000-30,000

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Vic-lone (calf, two years old)	5,000
Gingy (young ewe lamb)	1,500-2,000
Dele (sheep)	2,500-4,000
Dhi (goat)	2,500-3,500
Turkey	1,000
Hen, (depending on size)	400 - 700
Rosa (duck)	1,500-2,000
Pata (goose)	1,500-2,000

24. "Following is a price list of typical goods sold at the Cooperative in Kruma:

<u>Commodity</u>	<u>Price in Lek</u>
<u>Stof-Dock</u> - 'Dock material', black, blue, or grey, used mostly for trousers. Price per meter	500
<u>Bez</u> - Shirt material of miserable quality. Only in white. Per meter	250
<u>Knish</u> - Ready-made shirt of Bez material	1200-1500
<u>Opinga</u> - The national Albanian low shoes worn by farmers. Have rubber soles made of old tires. Pair	500
<u>Corape</u> - Cotton men's socks. Note: not exchangeable for agricultural goods. Pair	200-250
<u>Kryp</u> - Salt, per kilo	10
<u>Sheger</u> - Sugar, per kilo	200
Coffee, pure ground, per kilo	1500-2000
<u>Vaj-Guri</u> - Kerosene for lamps, per liter	25

25. "The farmers do not possess ration cards (triska).

26. "Upon either delivery of goods at the Cooperative or purchase of other items (even when exchanged for goods in kind, against quotas to be delivered), a farmer receives an invoice bill, a so-called Bonot-Faturat-Bardha. This is a printed white bill, with the heading of the Cooperative. It is about 11 x 8 cm. The right hand corner states the date. Underneath are four columns: number of item; sendi - item; cmimi - price; and shuma - total. If goods have been delivered the invoice bears the stamp Dorzue, which means delivered. If goods have been purchased and paid for, the invoice bears the stamp Pague. The stamp of the Cooperative is also on the document. The document serves as proof of delivery of goods, not mind so

27. "No agricultural machinery is available at the Cooperative in Kruma.

28. "Since the quotas are so high, the farmers are unable to fulfill all their deliveries. The farmers find they have to sell their possessions for virtually nothing in order to buy, at high prices, the missing commodities. Obviously there comes a point when they have nothing more to sell. A farmer can't sell his oxen because they are needed to plow the land. I recall the following cases in 1951 of persecution of farmers for nonfulfillment of agricultural deliveries:

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- (a) Uk Kecia was one of the five kulaks in Letaj. He was 38, with black hair and eyes and mustache, married, with two sons. Because he owned five hectares of land his quotas were necessarily high. At the end of 1950 he could not fill the meat quota due the Kruma Cooperative. He could have sold his two oxen, but he needed them for plowing. In January 1951 the president of the village People's Board, Curr Brahimi, accompanied by two police guards (police) from Kruma, confiscated the two oxen. Kecia was arrested, detained for three days in Kruma and then freed. He and his family were at starvation level. I do not know his fate.
- (b) Idriz Koka was a farmer in Letaj but not a kulak. He was 32, with black hair, married, with three sons. He owned four hectares of land. Because he had not fulfilled his agricultural deliveries nor paid his duty taxes the People's Board confiscated in May 1951 his oxen and all his furniture and household goods. Koka tried to escape to Yugoslavia to avoid arrest but was caught by the Frontier Guard. He shot three of them and then himself. His body was displayed in the village and then taken on a mule to Kukes. His eldest boy escaped to Yugoslavia. His wife and two other sons were arrested and sent to the concentration camp in Tepelene. His body was hung for three days in the cattle market (Pazari i Ujase) at Kukes. It was then thrown in the Urin river.

As a result of the Koka episode an entire village escaped into Yugoslavia in July 1951. Shaban Uka, a farmer from Zylfaj, two miles from Letaj, organized the escape. He was the chief of the People's Board in Kruma (Kryetari i Lokalitetit Krume), with 13 villages under his control. He was 32, about 178 cm high, blond with a beard and a mustache, with blue eyes. He was married. It will never be known for certain how he, a Communist, organized the escape, but one night in July 1951 the entire village of about 152 persons crossed the border with their household belongings and cattle.

Education

29. "The elementary school in Letaj occupies an old one-story building, which has two classrooms and a small room for the director. The pupils clean the school in rotation. The teacher is lodged with a local farmer. According to village regulations, every farmer must, in rotation, give free lodging to the elementary school teacher. Although farmers possess no ration cards, teachers do; a Triska, Puntor i Lehti, ration card for light workers No. 1. Food commodities issued on this card are bought at the cooperative at Krume or Kukes and given to the farmer with whom the teacher is boarding.
30. "In 1951 the basic wage for an elementary teacher was 3000 lek per month. The teacher in Letaj received an additional 15%, calculated on the basic monthly salary, because he was in a special zone, the so-called Shtese Lergsi e Veshtirsie. The food which the teacher bought with the triska cost about 500 lek per month; the farmer supplied the rest free -- Albanian farmers are usually generous. The teacher was paid overtime at the rate of 32 lek per hour. The salaries were paid on the first of the month at Kukes, at the Seksioni Arsimit (Education Section) of the Komiteti Ekzekutiv Rrethit Popullor Rrethit - Kukes (The Executive People's Committee of the Region of Kukes).
31. "There were about 120 pupils in the Letaj school, divided into four years.

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32. "Following is the elementary school curriculum:

First Year:

Abetare (The A, B, C.) - 14 hours weekly
 Matematika (Mathematics) - 8 hours weekly
 Bukurshkrim (Calligraphy) - 2 hours weekly
 Vizatim (Drawing) - 1 hour weekly
 Gjymnastika (Gymnastics) - 1 hour weekly
 Kange' (Singing) - 2 hours weekly

Second Year:

Kendim (Reading) - 6 hours weekly
 Aritmetik (Arithmetic) - 6 hours weekly
 Vizatim - 2 hours weekly
 Kange' - 2 hours weekly
 Gjymnastika - 2 hours weekly
 Bukurshkrim - 6 hours weekly

Third Year:

Same subjects as for the second year. In addition:
 Gramatik (Grammar) - 1 hour weekly
 Hartim (Writing) - 1 hour weekly
 Diktat (Dictation) - 2 hours weekly

Fourth Year:

Kendim - 6 hours weekly
 Aritmetik - 6 hours weekly
 Gjografi (Geography) - 2 hours weekly
 Histori (History) - 2 hours weekly
 M. Natyre (Natural Science) - 1 hour weekly
 Vizatim - 1 hour weekly
 Gjymnastik - 1 hour weekly
 Kange' - 1 hour weekly
 Hartim - 2 hours weekly
 Diktat - 2 hours weekly
 Gramatik - 2 hours weekly

33. "There is no Political Hour. Political education is achieved indirectly. For example:

- (a) For Abetare: Political notions are used in teaching the alphabet. Eg., 'One day Agimi, having a terrible pain in his tooth, tries to go to a local dentist. No one is able to heal him. If there had not been present in Albania, just at that time, the famous Soviet scientist and dentist Alexander (who, by the way, as any other Soviet scientist, etc.) . . .'
- (b) For Aritmetik: 'A farmer delivered one day to the Kooperativa E Grumbullimit 10 (ten) eggs. Another farmer delivered also 10 eggs. But the Kooperativa had in its stores already 100 eggs. The last 100 eggs, were taken away from the Kulaks, those farmers who exploit the poor farmers. All eggs were then taken by the Kooperativa to the hospital for sick persons. How many eggs were taken to the hospital?'

Political education, besides being driven into the heads of the poor children,

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through various examples, meant to teach the Communists nomenclature for various organizations, was also made thru songs. Below are two typical songs taught to schoolchildren:

(a) KREMLINI JEP DRITE MBI NEThe Kremlin Gives Us the Light

'Kudo mbi toke e oqean
Po ngrinen popujt me kushtetria
Kalon me zemer plot' juzim
I thone botes eise e ban

* * * * *

Qelik sod rrallet ti shtrangojme
Kremlini drite i jep mbi ne
Me ty Stalin' ne do tak sprojme
Te shtrajten page permbi dhe

* * * * *

Muk do ta lejme te filloje
Ne bote luften gjakesore
Mbi vdekjen jeten ne fitore
Na princ Stalini ne fitore

* * * * *

Note: After the third verse, the second is repeated twice.

Stalin do se thote page e jete
E per armikun varr i, zi
Stalin kudo neper planete
Vllazeria edhe liri.'

Note: Second verse is once more repeated twice.

(b) ENVERITTo Enver

'Enveri na prine ner betoja
Me flamur te partise gjitmonje
Me Enverin po ngjitet e reja
E jeta ne atdhe po lulzon

* * * * *

Herokomandant po te themi
Po ti shpetimtar je per ne
Mesonjes te dashur te kemi
E ti jepe drite ne atdhe.'

34. "No Russian language was taught to the schoolchildren or to anyone in the village of Letaj.

35. "Marks are given from 1 to 5. The best is 5 (Excellent). To graduate it is necessary to get a 3. There exist 3+ or 5- marks.

36. "The school year begins on 1 September and ends 31 May. There are no vacations. The only holidays authorized during the school year are: 7 and 8 November, 28 and 29 November, 25 December (Krishtlindja - Xmas), 1 January, 11 January, 4 February, 1 May. During 1-15 May a special period is dedicated to examinations. Only the fourth year pupils have to take examinations at the end of the school year. Attendance is obligatory for all children. Even sons of Kvlaks can attend the elementary school. Tuition fees consist of one Lek per month of school for each child (that is nine Lek yearly). It is the same for all children. If a child is absent for the first time, and unjustified absence, the director of the school or the teacher reprimands the parents. The second time of unjustified absence, a report is forwarded by the director of the school to the People's Board of Krume. A fine (Gjokka) of 2000 Lek must be paid by the parents of the child concerned, under penalty of arrest. At the third unjustified absence, the father of the child is punished with a 6000 Lek fine plus a three months' period of forced, unpaid work

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(Pune) To 'Detyrushma).

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37. "At the beginning of the school year a special meeting is held at the school. The President of the People's Board and the representative of the Democratic Front preside. Parents of the children attend to elect five parents (either man or woman). For every 100 children, according to provisions of law, five parents become members of the so-called Kshilli Prindarve (Parents' Council). This council, according to provisions of law, meets the first of each month, with the President of the People's Board, the representative of the Democratic Front, the two teachers, and the Polaku Katundit (the courier of the village) to examine school problems, eg firewood, or repairs. After the meeting all decisions are registered into a so-called Proces-Verbal signed by the President of the People's Board and the teachers. The Proces-Verbal is made in two copies, one kept in the registry of the elementary school, the other copy sent to the Education Section of the Executive People's Committee of Kukes.
38. "Textbooks must be purchased at the school at the beginning of the year. Purchase is obligatory but at the end of the school year the textbooks must be handed back to the school. No pupil can resell his books. Following are typical prices for textbooks:

First Year:

Abetare - 10 Lek
Arithmetik - 20 Lek

Second Year

Kendim - 30 Lek
Arithmetik - 20 Lek

Third Year

Kendim - 40 Lek
Arithmetik - 30 Lek

Fourth Year

Kendim - 40 Lek
Arithmetik - 60 Lek
Gjografi - 50 Lek
Histori - 60 Lek
M. Natyre - 50 Lek

Fletore (notebook) (with one line) - 20 pages - price 10 Lek each
Fletore (with two lines) - 20 pages - price 10 Lek each
Fletore (for arithmetic) - 20 pages - price 10 Lek each
Fletore (for drawing) - 10 pages - price 30 Lek each
Kalem (pencil) - price 15 Lek each
Goma - eraser - price 15 Lek each
Pilaka - small blackboard - price 100 Lek each
Kalem II Pilaka - chalk - 5 Lek per piece

These prices are low compared with the prices of the Cooperative for the same items. They are sold by the Education Section which supplies them to the school. For example, at the Cooperative a pencil is 150 Lek; one notebook (Fletore) is 100 Lek.

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39. "The duties of a schoolteacher include:

- (a) At the beginning of the school year, to make an inventory, with a signed Process-Verbal, with the President of the People's Board of the village, of all items in the school.
- (b) Registration of all pupils.
- (c) Compile special Planias - plans for the year, for three months, and for each month, week and day for all subjects taught.
- (d) Attend every two weeks special meetings on teaching methods at Kuma with other elementary teachers of the surrounding villages.
- (e) Attend once a month a special meeting held at the Education Section of the Executive Committee of the People's Board at Kukes.
- (f) At the end of the school year examinations are made by the teachers of the regions. The Education Section of the Kukes region appoints a three-member commission for each elementary school, composed of teachers of the same region but from a different village.

40. "At the end of the school year, the best pupils receive as prizes books by Marx, Engels, etc.

41. "The method of teaching is the Soviet method based on analysis and synthesis. For all subjects, it proceeds from the maximum to the minimum. For example, if one wants to talk about a village (let us say describe a village of Albania), one must begin with Moscow, describe that city, then come slowly down and explain Albania. The same method is used for political personalities, etc.

42. "Each elementary teacher in Albania according to the Soviet method, has a special notebook, called Plan-Konspekt (work plan) issued by the Ministry for Education. This Plan-Konspekt has to be signed by the teacher concerned, counter-signed by the director of the school. It must be available for inspections. It is made as follows:P L A N - K O N S P E K T

DATA	ORA	LANDA	ZHVILLIMI MSIMIT	PJESA EDUKATIVE	MJETE MSIMI
------	-----	-------	------------------	-----------------	-------------

Data - date of lesson

Ora - hour of lesson

Landa - subject

Zhvillimi Msimit - description of subject

Pjesa Edukative - the educational side of the subject

Mjete Msimi - concrete example of subject of lesson

Each page is used for one day. At the end of each page is a part called Kritik-Autokritik (Criticism and self-criticism made by teacher) and a part called Resultat (results) put into percentages."

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